



Generic Risk Assessment (1)

ENABLE (and other) Residential Trips on Sheldrake 2 and Close Shave

Last Revision Date: 21 Jun 2024

RA written by Danny Powlesland.
If this document needs amendment, please contact: WEXP Health and Safety Adviser

Residential Trips

Some residential trips are organised for young people on canal boats Sheldrake 2 and Close Shave. Waterways Experiences provide the boat, skipper, crew, and in some cases, support workers for a trip which can span several days.

Passengers

The passengers (referred to as 'clients') on residential trips are young people who may be completely able bodied, or may have challenging mental or physical conditions. In this case, clients are carefully selected for their suitability for such a trip and where needed, meetings take place with their parents or carers beforehand to gather all information relevant to the client and their needs. Clients with medical conditions may be uncoordinated in their movements or unsteady on their feet. They may use walking aids, or manual or powered wheelchairs. For such clients, support workers accompany them to assist as necessary with their independence during the trip.

Skipper and Crew

An experienced volunteer skipper and crew will manage the boat and a trip leader will be appointed. Volunteer care workers will be allocated to vulnerable clients according to their needs. All volunteers will receive adequate training for their role on the trip.

Boat Trip Activity

Clients will be settled onto the boat and allocated bunks and places to store their belongings. During the trip, clients will eat, drink, wash and sleep on board, as well as engaging in a range of social activities both on and off the boat. Aboard they will have complete freedom of the boat and will be able to go onto the front and rear decks using the steps or the passenger lift. The skipper may allow others to steer the vessel but they will be closely supervised. Clients will be encouraged to help crew operate locks and with boat handling. Other activities will be arranged away from the boat and these will be appropriately selected and supervised for the particular clients on each trip.

Potential Hazard	Who might be Harmed and How	Likelihood and Consequence	Existing Control Measures	Resultant Current Risk	Comments
1) Boarding/disembarkation					

Fall from ramp during boarding or disembarkation.	Client who is walking, or in wheelchair slips from ramp and falls into water sustaining injury from fall or shock from immersion into water.	Event very unlikely. Consequence: significant to major.	A crew member positions themselves at the side of ramp during boarding and disembarkation to offer assistance to those who need it. Assistance is given to wheelchair users as required.	Low	None
Fall from lift whilst lowering/raising clients to/from cabin area.	Client who is unsteady on feet, or in a wheelchair falls from open edge of lift into cabin below.	Event unlikely. Consequence: significant to major.	The lift is operated and supervised by crew members. Wheelchair brakes will be applied once on the lift. If a client is unsteady on their feet, a carer or crew member will go onto the lift and support the person during lift operation.	Low	None
2) In the Cabin					
Slip or fall during the boat trip.	Whilst moving around the cabin, an unsteady client falls over due to tripping or slipping, or being overbalanced when the boat comes into contact with something.	Event possible. Consequence: significant to major.	Clients will quickly become used to the movement of the boat, including the occasional bump. Clients who are particularly unsteady on their feet will be assisted to move about as is deemed necessary.	Not significantly higher than if the person was on land, or at home.	None
			Passengers will be warned that some bumps during the journey should be anticipated. However, these will normally be minor as skippers are trained and experienced. Skippers may allow an experienced crew member to take over responsibility for steering. Clients may also be invited to steer but this will at all times be supervised.		
			The skipper or crew member at the tiller will prevent passengers from using the steps when the boat is maneuvered into and out of locks when a bump is more likely. Water turbulence may be experienced in locks, but to reduce this, crew will only open gate paddles when the lock is half full and when signalled to do so by the person at the helm.		
Burns or scalds.	Client sustains burn from hot drink spillage, hot hob in kitchen, or from hot water.	Event possible. Consequences: minor to significant.	Bumps during the trip should be minor and not result in drink spillage. There will always be a level of supervision appropriate for the clients on the trip, and an eye for any hazards they are exposed to. Clients who do not have an appreciation of any hazard will be more closely supervised.		
Potential Hazard	Who might be Harmed and How	Likelihood and Consequence	Existing Control Measures	Resultant Current Risk	Comments
3) On Deck					

Fall overboard into water.	Sudden movement or bumping of boat, causes crew member, or vulnerable client, to fall into water, either over side rail, or through open passenger gate, causing injury, shock or drowning.	Event possible. Consequences: significant to catastrophic.	Clients who are particularly unstable on their feet will be given adequate assistance when they want to move about. Wheelchair users brought up onto deck will be assisted by crew as necessary. Vulnerable clients coming onto the deck will normally be required to wear buoyancy aids when the boat is moving, unless they demonstrate an ability to behave responsibly.	Fairly Low	None		
			Passengers are not allowed on the roof or gunwales of the boat. Crew will not normally use the roof or gunwales when the boat is in motion. The number of passengers allowed onto deck at any time will be restricted to ensure safe boat handling.				
			Access openings will be closed after being used to let clients or crew on or off.				
			Vessel bumps will normally be minor as skippers are experienced at boat handling. Skippers may allow experienced people to steer, but at all times, inexperienced people will be supervised.				
			The boat carries life rings, a throwing line and a boat hook to assist anyone who falls into the water.				
			Crew members are trained in 'man overboard' procedure. The skipper is trained in resuscitation, and a defibrillator is carried on the boat.				
Contact with stationary object, or with fish hook hanging from low branch.	Injury to person on deck after coming into contact with bridge, overhanging branch or fish hook.	Event possible. Consequence: minor to significant.	Crew will be alert to such dangers and teach passengers to be wary when the boat approaches low bridges or overhanging trees.			Fairly Low	None
Potential Hazard	Who might be Harmed and How	Likelihood and Consequence	Existing Control Measures	Resultant Current Risk	Comments		
4) At Locks							

Fall into water.	Whilst helping with, or moving about lock, a vulnerable client or child over balances and falls into lock water sustaining injury from fall, shock from immersion into water or drowning.	Event possible. Consequences: significant to catastrophic.	Vulnerable clients will wear buoyancy aids when off the boat and around locks. Support workers will provide an adequate level of supervision when vulnerable clients are off the boat.	Low	None
			The boat carries life rings, a throwing line and a boat hook to assist anyone who falls into the water.		
Injury from effort needed to move lock gates.	Crew or client suffers twist or strain when pulling or pushing on gate balance beam.	Event possible. Consequences: minor to significant.	Crew have been trained in the safest way to push on the beam to open lock gates. They will train clients who want to try this for themselves.	Low	None
Slip when opening or closing gates	Crew or client slips to the ground as a result of loose gravel or icy conditions when pushing against gate balance beam	Event possible. Consequences: minor to significant.	Passengers and crew are advised to wear shoes which will not slip on loose gravel and to take extra care in icy conditions.	Low	None
Injury from paddle operating mechanism.	Crew or client suffers injury from spinning or flying windlass when raising or lowering lock paddles.	Event possible. Consequences: minor to significant.	A crew member will always check that the ratchet is properly engaged before winding the paddle mechanism. During winding, they will also ensure that the windlass does not slip off the winding bar, and will remove the windlass from the bar after each winding. If a client helps with this, the crew member will carry out the same checks and assist with the process.	Fairly Low	None
5) Sinking					
End of boat tilts such that bow or stern fills with water.	Passengers and crew risk cold water shock or drowning if poor boat handling leads to bow or stern becoming stuck on cill or lock gate when lock is emptying or filling.	Event possible. Consequences: significant to catastrophic.	Skippers are all experienced and familiar with these risks. They will consciously position the boat clear of the cill and the lock gates when the water level is rising or falling.	Low	None
Potential Hazard	Who might be Harmed and How	Likelihood and Consequence	Existing Control Measures	Resultant Current Risk	Comments

When travelling 'up' the canal, a gate paddle is opened, causing a stream of water to flood the bow and causing boat to fill with water.		Event possible. Consequences: significant to catastrophic.	When the boat is in the lock, crew will only open gate paddles when signalled to do so by the person at the helm and they will also be fully aware of this danger.	Low	None
			The skipper will immediately become aware if a problem does occur. Using a combination of horn, hand signals and shouted commands, s/he will instruct the crew at the lock gates to immediately close the paddles. The problem will then be rectified by adjusting water level in the lock.		
6) Fire and Explosion					
Fire onboard boat.	Passengers and crew risk burns, smoke inhalation or asphyxiation due to outbreak of fire on vessel.	Event unlikely. Consequences significant to catastrophic.	Smoking is not allowed on the boat. Smoke detectors are fitted throughout the boat and are routinely tested.	Low	None
			During a trip, it is unlikely that a fire would go unnoticed for long and the chances of it becoming out of control are small. Fire extinguishers are placed around boat and should be capable of dealing with a small fire of any type.		
			Fire exits and evacuation information is given to all passengers in a talk at the start of each trip.		
			The number of wheelchairs taken on a trip is limited to make evacuation more manageable should it be necessary.		
Gas explosion	Leaking LPG bottles, system piping or appliance is ignited by spark causing explosion.	Event possible. Consequences catastrophic.	LPG bottles are located under the rear deck in a cylinder container that does not allow seeping gas to enter the cabin. Gas appliances are routinely maintained and the LPG gas system undergoes a detailed safety check every 4 years.	Low	Risk can be reduced further by fitting LPG gas detectors
Potential Hazard	Who might be Harmed and How	Likelihood and Consequence	Existing Control Measures	Resultant Current Risk	Comments
7) Other hazards during the trip					

Food poisoning	Client, carer or crew member suffers food poisoning during trip.	Event possible. Consequences: minor to significant.	Food hygiene is a subject covered in the volunteer's pre-trip training. All volunteers and clients are expected to follow good food hygiene practice throughout the trip. This includes hand washing, food preparation and food storage.	Fairly Low	None
Carbon monoxide poisoning	People on boat are affected by inefficiently burnt gases from cooker or central heating system.	Event unlikely. Consequences significant to catastrophic.	Appliances are serviced regularly. There is a CO detector on each boat which is tested regularly.	Low	None
Manual handling injury	Carer lifts disabled client and suffers strain injury.	Event possible. Consequences minor to significant.	Prior to the trip, volunteers are given specific information about what help each client will need and how that help is to be given. Two helpers will not lift someone weighing more than 8 stone. Any client weighing more than this and needing lifting will be taken on Close Shave which is fitted with a hoist for this purpose.	Low	None
Injury, stress or medical emergency	Client or Wexp volunteer sustains injury, suffers stress or sickness during trip.	Event possible. Consequences minor to significant.	Experienced Wexp volunteers will ensure that safe working practices are followed by everyone at all times. The skipper is trained in first aid, and a defibrillator is carried on the boat. There will also be regular 'down' time and debriefing sessions for crew and support workers. Clients stress levels will be observed. In the case of injury, stress or medical emergency, the skipper can at any time arrange for a person to be taken off the boat and for transport to be provided enabling them to go home, or into hospital.	Low	None
Abuse or maltreatment	Vulnerable clients are abused or maltreated during trip.	Event possible. Consequences significant.	Wexp has a safeguarding policy in place. Volunteers for residential trips will be carefully selected and expected to follow good practice in this regard. Some volunteers will have DBS clearance as a result of their profession. All other volunteers undergo a DBS check. All personal care is provided by two volunteers at all times. Any observations or disclosures of abuse would be reported to the safeguarding team and escalated as appropriate.	Low	None
8) Off boat activities	See below		Before any off boat activity, the carer team will consider the suitability of each activity for each client, discuss potential hazards and agree how any potential hazards will be addressed. During the activity, the team leader will constantly be alert to hazards and changing circumstances, and will be prepared to remove a client from, or stop the activity, if the risks become inappropriate for any individual.		See below
8a) Activities where risk is considered to be low. eg. walking around public spaces, crossing roads, visiting play parks, museums, etc.	Vulnerable client is injured crossing road or becomes lost in crowd.	Events possible. Consequences significant.	On outings, where clients will be crossing roads or in busy public places, groups may be split up for easier control. Normally there will be at least two carers with each group, with a ratio of at least 1 carer for 2 clients, although this could be relaxed where clients are older and more able. Groups will be kept together and regular meetings at prearranged places will be agreed. At least one carer from each group will carry a mobile phone.	Low	None

				LOW	None
	Client suffers medical seizure or similar.	Event possible. Consequences significant.	If any client has a condition which might trigger a seizure or similar, then at the beginning of the trip, the carer's team will plan an agreed course of action, should the situation arise. The plan will include immediate first aid actions, when and how to call emergency services, and what actions would be taken if the client needed to be taken back to the boat, or be transported home.		
8b) Activities involving animals	Client become ill after contact with animals.	Event possible. Consequences significant.	In addition to all precautions outlined above, a sensible hand washing regime will be imposed, ensuring that all clients wash their hands before eating, and at the end of the visit.	Low	None
8c) Swimming	Drowning	Event possible. Consequences significant to catastrophic.	The swimming ability of each client will be established before before visiting the activity. When in the water, clients will use floatation aids as necessary. Carers, who themselves must be competent in the water, will be in the water with them. Supervision levels in the water will be appropriate to the client's needs and be a minimum of 1 carer to 2 clients, and up to 2 carers or more for a client with greater difficulties.		
	Vulnerable client slips on wet surface or gets into difficulty in water.	Event possible. Consequences significant to catastrophic.	The rules of the pool will be explained as necessary and enforced by carers.	Low	None
	Client subjected to inappropriate behaviour in showers or changing rooms.	Event possible. Consequences significant.	When clients use showers or changing rooms, same sex carers will monitor the area to prevent any inappropriate behaviour.		
8d) Other water based activities. eg. canoeing, sailing etc.	All as 8c)	Event possible. Consequences significant.	Before the trip, a risk assessment will be requested from the body organising the activity. If this can be obtained, it will be reviewed and if concerns arise, discussion will take place with the organiser to agree if additional measures are required for our clients.	Low	None